

Pest Control

NASA GRC pest control is currently provided, on request, by a contractor, Call Henry Inc. The EMO area will be working with Call Henry to review environmentally preferable options. But some home remedies have worked for GRC employees either at the center or at home.

In July 2003, Daryl Beckett in Bldg 49 had an ant problem. There was a solution he wanted to try, but first did a test at home – chalk and borax/boric acid solution on anthills. His daughter likes to draw with chalk on the sidewalk, so he asked her to draw circles around anthills with chalk in rainbow colors to “decorate” them. Ants will not cross a chalk line. Daryl then dropped cotton balls with borax and boric acid inside the circles. Then they left the ants alone to “eat” in privacy. Results: 15 ant hills had no ants. Daryl’s problem at work was gone by the time the home test was finished, so he will attempt this trick if the ants return next season.



Gakken's Photo Encyclopedia:
Ants gathered around a piece of candy

Toni Mayor put together a book of home remedies for Earth Week a couple of years ago. The book includes some remedies for pests:

Ants

Some of the methods below are very hazardous to humans and pets. This is because they are meant to kill the ants. Be very careful!!! Do not leave them out in the open or where humans or pets can get to them easily. (Read the disclaimer.) There are others listed that are not hazardous, and you might want to use them instead.

Place pennyroyal, rue, dried paprika, crushed whole cloves or tansy around shelves and cupboards to keep ants away.

Mix 574 ml (2 cups) sugar, 237ml (1 cup) hot water, 30 ml (2 tablespoons) borax, and 30 ml (2 tablespoons) boric acid. Boil for 3 minutes, leave to cool, and bottle. Place this mixture in old saucers or shallow dishes near ant trails; the ants will eat it, return to their nests and die there. Replenish the dishes until no more ants return to them. CAUTION: Keep this mixture away from children and animals.

If you can find the nest, pour boiling water down it.

Sprinkle talcum powder on ant trails outside the nest. This is safer for use when children or pets are about.

Ants don't like crossing white chalk lines!

For ants in the garden, here's an old country recipe. Mix 250 grams (about 2 pounds) of salt with half a liter (1 pint) of water. Add 5 kilograms (4 ¼ pounds) of sawdust or bran and about 2.37 kiloliters (10 cups) of molasses. This makes a crumbly mixture which can be spread around plants and shrubs in the garden where there's an ant problem, yet isn't dangerous to children or pets.

Also for garden ants, plant mint. But be warned, it will take over your garden!

Cockroaches

Place pieces of vanilla beans around the area.

Get empty margarine containers, or grease the *inside* tops of jars with margarine. Pour about 1.3 centimeters (1/2 inch) of wine or beer, or a slice of banana, in the containers. Leave overnight where the cockroaches appear; the wine or beer will attract the cockroaches. The insects will climb in the container, and be unable to climb out because of the grease. Tip the trapped roaches into boiling water to kill.

Sprinkle Epsom salts around, replenishing every few weeks for best results.

Mix borax and sugar in equal parts, and place in cupboards where roaches live.

Mice

Sprinkle peppermint or clove oil in front of mouse hole and in cupboards.

If you're not sure where the mouse hole is, sprinkle some bicarbonate of soda, talcum powder, or similar powdery substance around suspect cupboard, skirting boards and openings. The mice will leave tracks in the powder and you'll be able to tell where they live.

My favorite solution... get a cat!

Snails

Snails won't damage seedlings or young plants if you sprinkle sawdust around them; the snails don't like the sawdust because it clings to them, and this method is harmless to pets and children.